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A Specimen of Toile de Jouy

(Cover Design)

THE Pennsylvania Museum has recently become the possessor by purchase of an interesting example of French printed linen which is highly esteemed by collectors of European textiles.

The specimen in question is a full bed garniture of "toile de Jouy." The linen is made on a hand-loom and the designs on it are in shaded red color. The quality of the design is of a high order. It is most fanciful, and at first sight, it will probably strike the layman as one of those "Chinoiserie" so common in the middle eighteenth century when, through Dutch trade with the Far East the fashions of the times turned to Asia for inspiration, and European manufacturers endeavored to reproduce lacquers and other Chinese and Japanese effects.

But a closer study will reveal the fact that the first impression recalling Chinese treatment in reality is largely due to the abundance of lanterns, which everywhere are attached to small kiosk-like buildings the architecture of which is in no way Chinese, and only distantly suggests the Far East. The careful observer will soon reach the conclusion that the artist who furnished the admirable design was drawing on his fertile imagination for this very spirited scene, or rather series of scenes.

Fortunately, we are not altogether without a guide as to his intention. He has kindly explained the meaning of the scenes which his pencil has so admirably executed. In the hands of one of a group leading a small procession, he has placed a banner on which he has inscribed "*Le Triomphe de Panurge au Pays des Lanternes*," i. e., "*The Triumph of Panurge in the Land of Lanterns*." This, of course, will at once explain to any one familiar with old French literature that it is a scene from Francois Rabelais' famous sixteenth century novel, in five books, containing "*The Lives and Heroick Deeds and Sayings of Gargantua and his sonne Pantagruel*." In the fifth book referring to the journey of Pantagruel and his follower Panurge in Search of the Oracle of the Holy Bottle, these worthies, after facing various vicissitudes make a landing at the "Land of Lanterns," where they are met by military Guards of the Port, who are described as wearing high crown'd hats (these are shown on the print).

They are escorted by these to the palace, where they have an audience of her Highness, the Queen of Lantern-Land, and are introduced to two "Lanterns of Honor." The Queen invites them to supper in order that they may choose their "Lantern-Guide." The Lanterns of Royal blood are clothed partly with "Bastard-diamonds," partly with "Diaphanous Stones," etc. All these Lanterns seem to be the great light-bearers of the old world or to bear relations to some light-giving power.

After supper the travelers go to rest and next day choose their "Guiding-Lantern" and take leave, as with her they proceed to the

Oracle of the Holy Bottle where they are duly led by their Guiding Light. To reach the Temple of the Holy Bottle they have to pass through a large vineyard planted by Bacchus himself. Their magnificent Lantern ordered them to eat three grapes, to put some vine leaves in their shoes and to carry a vine branch in their left hands. Eatables are mixed with an endless variety of vine-stocks. Bottles of all shapes and sizes, glasses of every kind are there, and all other "Bacchic Artillery." On the frontispiece of the triumphal arch, beneath the Zoophore they see the following couplet:

"You who presume to move this way,
Get a Good Lantern, lest you stray."

"Jupiter's Priestess," said Pantagrue, "in former days, would not, like us, have walked under this arbor."

"There was a mystical reason," answered our most perspicuous Lantern, "that would have hinder'd her. For, had she gone under it, the wine or grapes of which 'tis made, that's the same thing, had been over her head, and then she would have seemed overtopped and master'd by Wine; which implies that Priests and all Persons who devote themselves to the contemplation of Divine things, ought to keep their minds sedate and calm and avoid whatever might disturb and discompose their tranquillity, which nothing is more apt to do than drunkenness." "You also," continued our Lantern, "couldn't come into the Holy Bottle's presence after you had gone through this arch, did not the noble Priestess Bacchus first see your shoes full of vine leaves, which action is diametrically opposite to the other, and signifies that you despise Wine, and having mastered it, as it were, tread it under foot."

Thus this coverlet, hangings and valences of "toile de Jouy" appear to represent the art, literature and philosophy of another age.

The village of Jouy, the *Joyacum* of the Romans, is on the small river Bièvre in the department of Seine-et-Oise, at six kilometers to the S. E. of Versailles. Some years before the war it numbered some 2000 inhabitants and the château was of modern construction. The only importance of the place was its famous factory, which dates back to 1760 when it was founded by one Oberkampf. Prior to this it was the estate of the Constable of Clisson, whose lordship over the county went back to 1654. The products of the factory were held in high esteem, and justly. No old printed material seen today approaches the above described specimen in delicacy of design and detail.

S. Y. S.